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RITUALISM.

In the *Evening Gazette* of July 20th, I find this:

On Sunday, July 14, the services of the Free Church of St. Albans were attended by a large, well-dressed, and well-behaved congregation, who witnessed the ceremonies with interest and curiosity. Three priests officiated. The lecturer's magnificent vestments of green and gold contrasted strongly with the simple white surplices of the assistants, who donned a green stole only in preaching or while reading portions of the service, and the costume of the encolytes in white and rose-colored robes, served to complete the series of pretty, though rather bewildering tableaux about the altar, not at all suggestive of the simplicity of the disciples of our Lord. It has been said, "that we all have a natural tendency to get angry with those who don't think as we do," and we confess to being incensed at the imposition we received in presuming that St. Albans was an orthodox Protestant Church, we say nothing of the forms and ceremonies with which the church chooses to plume, and distinguish itself, though it does seem like—

"Wrapping nonsense round,
With pomp and darkness till it seems profound."

In the eye of Heaven the color or shape of a gown makes little difference, tall candles whose perpetual burning may be beyond the reach of snuffing, prostration, low as the devotees of a Hindoo Idol, intonations of the service by very unmusical or nasal voices, crossing, bowing, awkward genuflections, and apostolic church groupings, may all be the mere chaff attendant of the real wheat, the spirit may be in all this, as well as the latter, but when the words of the preacher from the pulpit announced in bold, unequivocal language, the doctrine of transubstantiation, in direct contradiction of the twenty-eighth article of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and the faith that Protestant children from early childhood are taught to believe and cherish, we ask in amazement: Is this a Protestant church?

The martyrs were put to death for insisting, among other things, "that bread was bread, and no spells which were uttered over it could make it anything else." The plain, bold avowal of Romish doctrine, any Romanist might have listened to with rejoicing; but it might well fill the hearts of those denominated by the speaker as "ultra-Protestants" with dismay and amazement, as they ask the question: Is St. Albans a Protestant church?

Of the latter part of this article I will not speak, the objections there taken being entirely of a doctrinal character foreign to the subject of the connection between Art and Ritualism, of which I took occasion to remark last week, and of which I would say a few more words in the present issue.

The author of the article quoted above must be woefully ignorant of the principles of Ritualism, or else must belong to the Puritan party, who view any attempt to render the services of the Episcopal Church more imposing and attractive as a species of profanity. Now, few people will deny that the services of the Romish Church are lent an additional splendor and impressiveness by the lavish use of brilliant color, lights, and a series of, what the editor of the *Gazette* calls, "pretty, though rather bewildering tableaux." Are we to gather from this that the Romish Church is devoid of devotion? That in display, and in display only, lies her strength? Far from it. The Romish, as well as the Episcopal Church, is founded upon a firm and solid rock—may hold its services in a hovel or a cathedral—the intrinsic value of them is always the same. But, when the opportunity offers, these services are given with greater "effect," if you choose to call it by that name—art is brought in to assist the church in presenting to her children the adoration of the Almighty in the garb befitting His Majesty. And here art, ecclesiastical art, revels in the delights of gorgeously illuminated reredoses, magnificent

altar pieces, elegantly chased chalices, cunningly wrought vestments, and richly blazoned missals. Here she attempts to present to man the worship of God in its most attractive and elevating form; fairly drawing him to the foot of the altar, whether he will or no, by her strong right hand of beauty, grace and color.

All this is not

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No; emphatically, no; it is simply adding to the dignity and splendor which the church service by right demands. It is the homage rendered by Art to the Giver of all good. It is the outpouring of devout hearts, who would fain deck the service in the richest garb; believing that as from God "cometh all might, power and honor," to Him also should be rendered in return all the riches, glory, and talent of mankind.

If this is done in the Romish church, why not in the Episcopal? We are an offshoot of the former, and in many places the ritual is the same in the two churches. There is a great similarity in our creeds, and in the main points of religion we differ but slightly. Why then should it be necessary for us to debar all beauty of form and color from our church service? Why should we go off into an ecstasy of holy horror if a priest wear a chasuble instead of a surplice? Why need we raise our hands in absurd protest against the use of altar lights and the introduction of solemn and imposing ceremonies? Simply this: because that grain of Puritanism, brought over by our ancestors in the Mayflower, has taken root and flourishes among us; confining our ideas within a narrow scope, and teaching us that Ritualism is an invention of the evil one that must in the end lead us to perdition. This is why we find a minister of the Episcopal church saying that he "would sooner enter the jaws of Hell than enter the doors of a church where Ritualism is practiced." These are the words spoken by a man who has been sent forth into the world to preach the gospel of "peace on earth; good will towards men." Can we wonder, then, that the less informed should be more bitter and bigoted?

If an incontrovertible argument were needed in favor of Ritualism, we have it in the Temple services of the Jewish church—expressly instituted by Divine command—a service full of pomp and splendor, teeming with all the poetical magnificence of the Orient, and possessing rites far more elaborate than those of any church of the known world. The great founder of Christianity, Christ himself, was a constant and devout attendant at these services; showing by precept and example his great veneration for them—should we not, then, the recipients of His mercy, display this same spirit of imposing services in our worship of the Saviour of mankind?

Setting aside the religious part of the ques-

tion, Ritualism is slowly, but surely, doing great good to art; inciting artists to loftier works, and, by the rich decorations of church altars, leading our painters to the depicting of imposing church interiors—a branch of art which has been almost entirely neglected in this country. Added to this, we are building handsome churches; grand and brilliant edifices, in strong contrast to the tawdry, ginger-bread specimens of architecture which have heretofore characterized our religious buildings.

Let us, then, progress in the good work. Let Religion and Art, twin sisters for the amelioration of mankind, walk hand in hand. Religion instructing art, and art, through religion, instructing man. Let us show the world the greatness and power of God through the beauty and grandeur of His church service. Then, and then only, will we have consummate Religion, and consummate Art.

PALETTA.

MATTERS THEATRIC.

Lotta made her first bow at Wallack's Theatre on Monday evening. The event was the occasion of an overwhelming house and much vociferous applause. *The Stage* tells us that Lotta is "a little isle of light, full of wild and spiritual brightness. She is one of those bright sparkling ingots it is impossible to treat ethically. She is too blithe and agile for heavy critical artillery, your guns are pointed, and she is gone; Lotta is a diamond edition of Dejazet." Fine writing that! and probably must have cost considerable per line.

Let us see if it is not possible to discard poetry in the young lady's case and take a somewhat more common sense view of the matter. Imprimis, then, Lotta has much to learn before she can be a thoroughly good actress; at present she is little more than a clever pantomimist and banjo player; her delivery lacks both force and expression, and to make up for these deficiencies she indulges in gymnastic antics, utterly absurd in themselves, but vastly pleasing to the soft hearts and corresponding brains of the young men who sit in the front rows of the orchestra, representatives of the "fast" youths of New York. These learned pundits applaud her heartily and lay an homage of bouquets at her little feet; while she, poor soul, thinking she has made a great "hit," skips and frolics still more lustily. Thus does this "diamond edition of Dejazet" increase her circulation (a metaphorical way of saying, thus does she walk into public favor).

Lotta, in addition to being "a bright, sparkling ingot," is not a little vulgar; not coarsely vulgar, it is true, but covertly so—a vulgarity that crops out here and there most unmistakably, probably causing infinite delight to the mild young men mentioned above and a corresponding feeling of disgust